GIN,

THE SKELETON SPIRIT AND DEMON OF DEPRAVITY!!

A VOICE

FROM

THE POISON PALACES!!!

ADDRESSED TO THE TWO HOUSES OF

THE BRITISH LEGISLATURE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE GOLDEN RULES OF LIFE," "EVERY BODY'S FRIEND,"
"A BOOK FOR THE WHOLE WORLD," &c. &c.

"Oh! that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains!"—*Shakspeare.*

"Oh thou invisible spirit of *Gin* if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee Devil."—*Ibid.*

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MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

Of all the causes which, at the present moment, in a far greater ratio of proportion than at any former period, conspire to debase mankind, and render human nature disgusting and deplorable, there is not one that knocks at your official residence with a louder call for redress, or comes with a more urgent claim for your immediate interference, than the pernicious and demoralizing license, at present held out as a premium to the poor for the unlimited consumption of gin.

For a long period of time now, the cultivated mind of man has ceased to speculate on the pernicious tendency of this admitted poison, and on all sides, and by all parties to whom our Creator has given the faculty of thought and reason, has it been acknowledged that the most dire and lamentable results are the consequence of this unchecked abuse of health and education.

Among the exceptions (alas, too many) which present themselves to this general view of facts, we shall find that for the most part they are unfortunately to be met with in those individuals whose natural abilities and sense have yielded to worldly gain, and whose better feelings have been sacrificed at the shrine of filthy lucre. Doubly important, then, becomes the necessity for you,

actively and unanimously to grasp the increasing evil, if the welfare of the community and the amelioration of the people are any longer to be considered as incentives to your exertions.

Among your members, whom I have now the honour to address, there are those who have long and ably distinguished themselves by their numerous and praiseworthy efforts to stem the career of crime; and surely if signal success has crowned your endeavours in crushing the fruits of evil, it will not be permitted to damp your energies, or palsy your endeavours in grappling with the root.

Of what use, my Lords and Gentlemen, is the education of one half the people, if uncontrolable indulgence in burning liquids be permitted to encircle the other? Becomes it not worse than idle and ridiculous to legislate for the education of youth, when we may daily behold infants cradled at the breast, imbibing the hellish effects of this unrestricted free trade in burning and destroying flame?

You are possibly ignorant of the awful pictures hourly witnessed of real life in the purlieus of those poverty-stricken neighbourhoods, where the pawnbroker and the gin-pourer exercise their calling in lucrative rivalry on the vitals of the poor; but let your carriages be driven into those districts where a perfect conviction of the evils could present itself to your mind, and you would incontestably prove that the picture is painted with sad and heart-rending reality.

The finest picture of satire on this particular vice

perhaps ever bequeathed us, is to be seen in Hogarth's celebrated picture, which carries with it a double weight as the production of such a master mind in the pourtrayal of human nature. More recently, it has been suggested to establish, by joint stock company, one entire building, where the ground-floor should be divided into three compartments, with pawnbroker, spirit-spiller, and Undertaker, each pursuing their progressive avocations.

One of the principal arguments against the suppression of the retail trade, is the immense property already invested therein; but while a protective consideration for the property of any portion of the people is ever an important object in your deliberative councils, it cannot be concealed that an undue preponderance in their favour is, at all times, a greater injustice to the majority. If, therefore, an apology is to be found on that score, the greater shall the evil become, the greater must the argument be for its continuance, while property increases in its supply, and the consequences become more dreadful.

Another, but, if possible, a more worthless argument for the continuance of the system finds shelter in those whose duty it becomes to swell the amount of the revenue.

My Lords and Gentlemen, you do not, you cannot, desire to balance in the same scales the quarter's income, and the salvation of so many souls! What, is it brought forward to stand for a moment in comparison with the fact, that the present pernicious system is sending hundreds to the gallows, and which, so long as you abstain

from an alteration of, you most indubitably lend your sanction to.

Can it for one moment be believed, that the wholesale demoralization of a community is permitted to remain a counterpoise against the necessity that prevails for a timely raising of the revenue? In other words, are soul and excise to be placed side by side in juxtaposition and parallel columns, to make up the creditor and debtor account whenever the balance shall be struck?

There are *many* modes in which the revenue can be collected—but *one* for the correction of this abuse: so said an eloquent member of the Lower House, the principal objection to which was, the temptation an increased duty would hold out to smuggling! But here it may be asked with some reason, whether it be not better to punish for the commission of such an illegal act (carrying with it comparatively no moral turpitude), than continue the present cruelty, and, awaiting the committal of more serious crimes, transport, or deprive of life, the matured and grown up offender.

There cannot be, in Two such Enlightened Assemblies of Legislators, any ignorant of the affinity which forms the connecting link between the cause and commission of crime, since you have only to keep in mind that you have placed it in the power of any individual for the small pittance of 6*d.* to deprive himself of that reason, the temporary want of which has, in too many instances, led to the commission of those crimes, for which the law, in its humanity, requires the perpetrator's life.

Intoxication, even when enforced, which bears no

proportion to the number of times the necessity prevails for it, is a fine of 5*s.*, but the commission of many an act arising from that *purchased* state (which the law of the land permits the sale of at 6*d.*, and actually allows—nay, sanctions—for 5*s.*), has been considerately rewarded by punishment with death, and in many more cases (as if to make up in quantity for quality), with banishment for life and other periods.

Thank God, there are yet in your ranks many who will not be deterred from an investigation of facts, merely because your attention has been invited by the humble tracer of these lines; and there are those still to be found in the legislative councils of the people, who will dare the outcry that will come from these insolated sinks of infamy, whenever the time shall arrive that it shall be deemed of sufficient importance in the maintenance of the public good, to *oust* these hot-beds of corruption.

When the necessity for a personal inspection of these corrupt and degrading receptacles for filth and rags shall force itself on the conviction of any among you, the observation will not fail to strike you, that where poverty and beggary have spread their influence, these palaces have taken their stand to pour out in almost the lowest coin of the realm, their baneful and maddening liquids.

Disbursed at a most enormous rate of profit, you will see these temples for the gratification of the worst passions, giving shelter to the houseless poor, merely while they spend the produce of their latest pledge, or that portion of their hard-earned gains their children possibly require elsewhere,—erected in very many cases without

regard to expense, and property invested in the most costly appearances to lure the wary and entrap the passers by. Casks of the largest dimensions, so placed above the windows to be easily seen from the street,—domes, occupying the usual situation of first floors,—and plate glass in prodigious quantities, prodigally spread over with brass rods to heighten and add to the general effect.

Oftentimes the bar appointments are of the most costly character, and behind the counter may be seen the hired females of the proprietors, dressed up in suiting character to deal out the deadly drug.

Other poisons are labelled, and extreme caution used in their circulation; but here exists the most boundless distribution, and the most barefaced depravity, in the open and undisguised supply of it.

There is a fine contrast presented to an observer, in the splendour which prevails without, and the misery which manifests itself within. From some portion of the architectural pile are depended lamps, which put to shame the hitherto huge dimensions of our street and prison lights. Costly mahogany in lavish profusion displays itself on all sides, and even the barrels are turned to account, and painted with appellations that startle and disturb a sincere well-wisher to his country. "*Old Tom*," "*Cream of the Valley*," "*Mountain Dew*," "*Cure for the Blue Devils*," "*My Lady's Eye-Water*," are a few of the large lettered labels that ornament the poison within.

Oh, my Lords and Gentlemen, how I desire that I

could prevail on some of you to make a personal inspection of these hourly increasing horrors, which hurry human beings in countless masses to their untimely graves; for you can have no idea of the wholesale misery and ruin dealt out to thousands of your fellow-creatures.

You would then see the blanched cheek, and the pallid brow, the deadly eye, and the ghastly countenance, that momentarily come in contact in these nurseries to crime, and these stepping-stones to transportation; you would contemplate with fearful verity the degrading spectacle, and be convinced of the moral obligation you owe mankind to put down these hundred-headed monsters, which rear their carcases in liveries of dazzling and appalling splendour, as if in mockery of the rags they house.

My Lords and Gentleman, it is not perhaps for an unknown voice to suggest a remedy to those whose peculiar and particular province it becomes to legislate for their fellow subjects; but conceived, as is the proposition, in the most profound profession of respect, it is thrown out for your best consideration, whether the sale might not be altogether prevented in small quantities, and be prohibited from being sold at all on the premises. Among those in society who had reason and moderation to temper their inclination, the revenue would not suffer; and those whose time and attendance is sacrificed at present in procuring it by stealth away from their families, it is apprehended the demand would materially diminish. Another mode suggests itself for your attention, if, whether it would not be of easy practice, with the

most beneficial results, to put a heavier license on, as a necessary check to the sale of the present small modicums, and proportionably reduce the duty in the sale of larger quantities; by this means, an effectual remedy would result, by throwing overboard the smuggling argument, while the sale of such small quantities under a proportionate drawback in the price paid for the license, and the reduced cost of the larger quantum, would both conduce to the abolition of private stills.

A yet greater field for improvement would be opened by the removal of the duty on coffees and teas, and turning the demand for drink to those at least sober establishments, reading-rooms, and coffee-shops, to which it is pleasant to turn and scan the scale of intellect and thirsting knowledge which manifests itself at the one, and the appalling degree of idiotcy reeking in the other, where the spirit of gin takes precedence of, and fearfully contrasts itself with, the spirit of literature distinguishable at the former.

As, my Lords and Gentlemen, you are aware, other questions are oftentimes conceived from partial views, and limited ideas; but the present subject is wholly free from party trammels. Not one among you is there who could not handle it with credit to his own order, and meet with an honourable support from that portion of the Two Houses, which, on other matters, might as honorably hold themselves ready to become their avowed opponents. When you are told herein that which can be verified before a committee of your members, that on the morning of the sabbath, a guinea a minute is an average of the

receipts at one establishment alone, you will, perhaps, think it fitting matter for immediate investigation before such a tribunal, and acquit of any and every intention to play the saint, the humble aspirant who has laboured herein briefly, but earnestly, to raise up the spirit of one among you to bring forward the matter, in the hope of all ultimately uniting to stem the current of depravity, and thus entitle yourselves to another claim on the lasting gratitude of your country for your praiseworthy and proper protection of the best and dearest interests of mankind.

You can have no idea of the growing feelings which pervade the respectable portion of the community—of the paramount necessity there prevails for an immediate investigation of the evils which arise from the continuance of the impunity.

The members of both your Legislative Assemblies are accustomed to judge of the pressure from without, more by the number of petitions placed upon your tables, than any other indication; but it must not be expected in a commercial empire like our own, that pounds, shillings, and pence, will yield to a sense of the necessity for moral improvement; and therefore it is, that the silence which reigns at present is no assurance of apathy on the subject.

Can it be that ye are ignorant of the cause of crime, and the dreadful deeds which tread upon the heels of drunkenness; or are ye callous to the better feelings of human nature? A thousand records of your well-spent labours rise up in judgment against so base a thought;

and charity would fain suppose the former, but that the police reports daily go forth upon the wings of the metropolitan press to give the lie to such a plausible interpretation. For the sad effects of drunkenness, let the Magistracy of England be appealed to, and you will find in their evidence food enough for reflection.

Would ye desire to know some only of the immediate results which spring therefrom, pursue the method which alone can furnish them, and before a committee of your members, examine at length the Coroners of the three kingdoms.

The remoter results of this deadly sin may be arrived at by a conference with the Governors and Directors of our Gaols and our Prisons, our Houses of Correction, our Magdalens, and our Penitentiaries; for they could throw a light upon the subject far too frightful to contemplate with contentment: and if ought after can possibly be wanting to confirm the pestilential curse, the Hospitals may furnish it.

Hearken to the evidence of our Mad-House Keepers, and the Proprietors of private Lunatic Establishments. Confirm it by the frightful and fatal facts that could be furnished by the Faculty alone; and many a deed of blood will stain your journals of souls once comparatively free from sin, that have gone down to their graves unknown and unlamented.

Collate these testimonies, unite these records, gather these authorities, assemble these living proofs, collect these hosts of witnesses, summon before you these competent judges, and be not ashamed to learn that which it

is only mercy to suppose you are ignorant of, then rivet together all these links of one irresistible chain, and give to them their lawful weight. In the other scale, place the interests of the gin-spinner (that caterer to crime) and the single solitary item cut from the budget, and you will see how soon the latter shall reach the beam.

There is another surer test by which your judgments may be piloted, if ye will permit the alchymist to play his part in this tragedy of real life, and Apothecaries' Hall to display its talent in the exhibition of the poisoned and deadly drug.

Do this, my Lords and Gentlemen, if ye will not all, but let a tithe be gathered of the concurring condemnations, and it will cease to be flung at us as a national reproach, that in the British senate, with upwards of one thousand souls, whom providence has selected to protect our properties and persons, not one individual could be found to brave the battle for a nation's good!

It is in vain to erect prisons, useless to increase the horrors of transportation, idle to multiply our churches, ridiculous to amend the penal code;—so long as the same causes be permitted to remain, the same results must flow. The prison cells will ever find occupants, as now; the pages of the Newgate calendar will go on increasing; Death will count his usual returns of "*Killed*;" the Australian districts will continue to be peopled in the same ratio as hitherto, and the work houses will not be deprived of their average supply; beastiality and blackguardism will take their usual rapid strides, and the

numberless millions enlisted under the banners of civilization will have their ranks thinned as heretofore, if all be permitted to progress as now.

Confident that Parliament yet possesses patriots, an attempt has been made to enlist your feelings, and attract your immediate attention on a matter so intimately and dearly connected with humanity; and if the subject matter of the pamphlet find but a ready passport to your approbation, and produce an echo in the rectitude of your minds, the first object of the writer is attained.

While your valuable and important time is at work with the machinery of rail-road bills, common enclosures, or turnpike trusts, condescend, my Lords and Gentlemen, sometimes to think that the salvation of so many thousand souls is involved in the question, and that their lives and dearest interests are in your keeping; at the same time remembering that two of the Lower House left their labours, and quitted this world with an enviable reputation—the one by his successful protection of the dumb creations of our Heavenly Father, and the other, by the bursting of those bonds and manacles of iron which the same cause as the present (gain) sought to bind for ever human beings to. May they reap their reward in Heaven!

Nightly you legislate almost within sight of the tombs of your forefathers, who have left behind them names enrolled in history's page for honour and renown! May their fame and their example emulate you to deeds of glory yet unwon, and in your multifarious deliberations

may you never cease to be mindful that the worst enemies of mankind are those who pamper the propensities and pander to the passions of suffering poverty; and ere that hour arrive, the soul is summoned hence, and leaves its earthly tabernacle—a day shall come to shed the halo of its lustre between your conscience and your maker.

I have the honour to subscribe myself,

With every sentiment of becoming respect,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

T. R. DRURY, Printer, 10, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street.